



Keep Christ in Christmas this year!! By Karen Whiting



Simple ways to focus on Jesus. Choose different ones each year.

When shopping...

- Find Christian symbols displayed and how they relate to Jesus, from lights, bells and star decorations to nativity sets being sold. See who can find the most!
- Look for gift-wrap that reflects the meaning of the season to encourage more merchants to sell more Christian paper. Or stamp your own wrap!
- Pass on God's love, even if it is simply to say, "Have a Blessed Christmas."

Before Christmas...

- Make room for the light of the world-Jesus! Light an advent wreath and use the time to sing Christian carols and read prophecies about Jesus.
- Make room in your budget. Shop for baby clothes for Jesus. Pick out what you would really want him to wear. Then wrap it up and give it to a homeless shelter.
- Choose a giving project, such as toys for the needy. Involve the family in buying the gifts. Add a special love note with each gift telling others about God's love.
- Reach out to neighbors. Make plates of cookies or buy and give out candy canes. Add Christmas cards and a brief message that tells why you have room for Jesus.
- Think of ways to express love for Jesus, such as doing someone else's chores.
- Make a paper chain of love deeds. For each person's daily deeds that expressed love, add a paper link. On Christmas Eve, wrap the chain around the tree or nativity set to wrap the tree in love.
- Read the Christmas story a few times. Talk about the events and people.
- Invite Jesus in: Have everyone make heart decorations to decorate their bedroom doors. Let each person write or draw a message inviting Jesus to be with him/her always! Cut a door opening in the heart and place a picture of Jesus inside the door.

Christmas Day....

- Sing Happy Birthday to Jesus. Give thanks to God for the gift of life, eternal life.
- As you open stockings, relate items to being filled with God's love or the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

De-stress

- ◆ Take five minutes breaks throughout each day to relax and thank God for coming.
- ◆ Give out hugs. Hug yourself. Hugs calm you and get others in the mood to help.
- ◆ Delegate tasks to family and guests.
- ◆ Identify, pray about stressors, eliminate some. Reflect on what brings joy.
- ◆ Eat healthy, rest, listen to carols, and laugh.

Still gift hunting or wrapping?

- ◆ Wrap a picture or a promise note instead. Add a note that the greatest gift is Christ.
- ◆ Pop gifts in pillowcases.

Christmas cards not signed and sent?

- ◆ Send Valentines or Easter cards instead with a message of God's love

Over-scheduled?

- ◆ Say no to some events or just pop in for five minutes. Choose joy over stress!